

## Developing Screening Criteria

Current research on implicit cognitive and structural bias identifies a need to invest time in the early stages of a hiring process (ideally before the position is posted, but at least before applications are reviewed). The goal is to reach agreement about which qualifications most strongly predict better performance, what is needed to meet and to demonstrate strength for each qualification, and how/when we will evaluate candidates on those requirements. Performing this task before advertising the position lets us “test” whether the qualifications are likely to produce the intended results, and to refine them if needed. This tool should be developed collaboratively by the search committee and used at every screening stage. Being rigorously accountable to the matrix at all stages of the search can mitigate unintended cognitive bias.

**Required or Preferred Qualifications** – All required qualifications **must** be met for a candidate to be hired. Preferred qualifications are the additional characteristics that predict even better performance on the job.

**Relationship to Job** – In order to broaden our thoughts about how someone might meet this qualification, we first determine what this qualification allows the appointee to do in the position. Which position duties require it? Why is it needed, how is it used in the job, and what would be difficult or impossible without it? Does this qualification suggest a detailed set of critical position skills that are not otherwise articulated? If so, what are the specific skills we expect that meeting this qualification will predict?

**Transferable?** – Is this a transferable skill? Transferable skills are “portable” skills that someone can learn in one setting and use in another; when a skill is transferable, the screening criteria should be quite flexible.

**Screening Criteria** – What is the range of different experiences, accomplishments, or learning that we believe will meet this qualification? If you have a degree requirement that includes “other relevant discipline,” what are those disciplines? Once the initial range of criteria is captured, consider who we might miss if we limit ourselves to interpreting it only this way. Based on how it is used on the job, are there other ways to meet it we may have overlooked or not considered? Ask “how else could it be met” at least five times before continuing.

**Priority** – How important is strength in this qualification compared to other qualifications in the same category (compare required qualifications to other required qualifications and preferred qualifications to other preferred qualifications)? Required qualifications: Identify the required qualifications that are most important for candidates to meet strongly (vs. just meeting) as predictors of better performance – these are the ones you would devote more time to evaluating. Measurable/numeric threshold qualifications are typically low priority, because we merely need to determine whether or not the candidate meets them – we wouldn’t devote time to evaluating “strength” in them. Preferred qualifications: Which preferred qualifications are the most important predictors of better performance? This column should include “high,” “medium” and “low” ratings for both required AND preferred qualifications (since it reflects relative importance).

**Strength** – For medium and high-priority qualifications, what are the indicators that a candidate meets them STRONGLY (vs. just meeting them)? What ways of meeting (or exceeding) the qualification predict better performance?

**When to Assess** – At what stage will we assess this qualification? If more than one stage, what are we looking for at each stage? (Application, phone/Skype interview, airport interview, campus visit, reference check, etc.) When will we eliminate candidates for not meeting it?